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Selected Data on

WOMEN'S ATTITUDES TOWARD COTTON AND OTHER FIBERS IN CLOTHING

Agricultural Marketing Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Washington 25, D.C.

With the entrance of new fibers and blends into the apparel field, data on reactions of consumers become increasingly important to those concerned with the production and marketing of farm produced fibers. This report, on women's ownership of and attitudes toward fibers in selected items of apparel, is based on one of a series of studies on consumer reactions to agricultural products being conducted by the Market Development Research Division, Agricultural Marketing Service. These studies are part of a broad program of marketing research designed to aid in expanding markets for farm products.

The present study was conducted under the general direction of Trienah Meyers. Esther S. Hochstim designed the survey; consultation and technical advice were provided during the planning stage by the National Cotton Council of America and The Wool Bureau, Inc.

The data on which this publication is based were collected by the Interview Research Institute, Division of Market Research Corporation of America, of Chicago, Ill., under contract with the United States Department of Agriculture.

Washington, D. C. June 1960

Selected Data on

WOMEN'S ATTITUDES TOWARD COTTON AND OTHER FIBERS IN CLOTHING

By Margaret Weidenhamer, project director
Market Development Research Division

This preliminary report presents a preview of some of the major findings from an extensive study covering women's use of and attitudes toward cotton and other fibers in the following items of clothing:

Dresses:
- Summer dresses
- Between-seasons dresses
- Knit dresses

Blouses:
- Summer blouses
- Winter blouses

Skirts and Suits:
- Summer skirts
- Summer suits

Slips:
- Whole slips
- Petticoats or half slips

Rainwear:
- Raincoats
- Dual purpose coats

(Definitions used in the questionnaire appear in table 1)

Data are based on 2,310 personal interviews conducted in May and June 1959 among women between 18 and 65 years of age. Respondents were chosen by area probability techniques to be representative of all such women in the United States.

This compilation of tables without text is published to make key statistics available as quickly as possible. Data are included on women's fiber ownership, preferences, and reasons for preferences for selected readymade clothing items currently in their wardrobes. The data are preliminary and subject to revision.

A full report containing detailed information on the topics presented herein and on the other subjects included in the questionnaire is being prepared for publication.

Table 1.--Proportion of all women interviewed who owned each type of garment readymade

	Percent
Dresses:	
Summer dresses (not house dresses or very dressy clothes but just regular summer dresses)	90
Between-seasons dresses (for wear in spring or fall when weather is changeable but not too hot or cold)	56
Knit dresses	24
Blouses:	
Summer blouses (including any worn year round)	77
Winter blouses	44
Skirts and suits:	
Summer skirts (not two-piece suits or dresses but just separate skirts for summer wear)	53
Summer suits (matching jackets and skirts for summer wear)	32
Slips:	
Whole slips	92
Petticoats or half slips (not crinolines)	72
Rainwear:	
Raincoats (to be worn only in rainy weather)	28
Dual purpose coats (to be worn in dry or rainy weather and treated to be water repellent)	32
Number of women	2,310

Table 3.--Percentage distribution of fiber preferences among women who owned the specified readymade garments 1/

Material preferred	Dresses			Blouses		Skirts and suits		Slips		Rainwear
	Summer	Between-seasons	Knit	Summer	Winter	Summer skirts	Summer suits	Whole	Petticoat or half	
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
Cotton	56	18	8	59	25	59	22	16	26	18
Cotton - Dacron	15	5	--	16	6	12	6	6	7	4
Other cotton mixtures	3	5	--	--	--	3	7	--	3	5
Rayon or acetate	4	11	--	--	3	3	6	6	6	5
Nylon	4	--	3	7	11	--	--	57	44	--
Linen	3	4	--	--	--	6	17	--	--	--
Silk	--	9	--	--	6	--	6	--	--	--
Dacron	4	3	--	6	5	6	7	--	3	--
Orlon or Acrilan	--	--	10	--	7	--	--	--	--	--
Wool	--	13	38	--	15	--	--	--	--	3
Wool mixtures	--	7	8	--	6	--	--	--	--	--
Plastic	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	16
Other fibers or mixtures	--	4	--	--	--	--	5	--	--	4
Miscellaneous weaves (fiber not known)	--	3	--	--	--	--	4	--	--	8
No preference	6	14	28	5	11	6	13	5	6	33
Number of women	2,081	1,296	559	1,776	1,009	1,219	743	2,120	1,664	1,225

1/ Percentages may add to less than 100 because materials preferred by fewer than 3 percent are not shown.

Table 2.--Percentage distribution of materials women said their readymade garments were made of, among women who owned the specified garments 1/

Materials owned	Dresses			Blouses		Skirts and suits		Slips		Rainwear	
	Summer	Between-seasons	Knit	Summer	Winter	Summer skirts	Summer suits	Whole	Petticoat or half	Raincoats	Dual purpose
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
Cotton	89	34	15	90	45	90	35	34	48	12	29
Cotton-Dacron	24	6	--	25	10	14	6	10	10	--	5
Other cotton mixtures	12	12	3	3	3	10	15	4	5	--	9
Rayon or acetate	22	30	--	10	11	13	17	17	16	4	11
Nylon	19	5	3	30	28	--	--	78	67	--	--
Linen	17	10	--	3	--	22	27	--	--	--	--
Silk	14	19	--	9	15	3	10	6	5	--	--
Dacron	10	4	--	14	8	9	5	5	4	--	--
Orlon or Acrilan	3	3	9	3	12	4	--	--	--	--	--
Wool	--	24	66	--	31	3	6	--	--	--	7
Wool mixtures	--	9	10	--	9	--	4	--	--	--	--
Plastic	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	59	--
Other fibers or mixtures	6	9	--	--	--	3	8	4	3	6	4
Miscellaneous weaves (fiber not known)	10	18	11	4	8	6	16	3	4	16	34
Number of women	2,081	1,296	559	1,776	1,009	1,219	743	2,120	1,664	653	747

1/ Percentages may add to more than 100 because some women mentioned more than one material, or less than 100 because materials named by fewer than 3 percent are not shown.

Table 4.--Summer dresses (readymade): Reasons mentioned by 10 percent or more of the women for liking preferred material best 1/

Major reasons	Material preferred for summer dresses				
	Cotton	Cotton-Dacron	Dacron	Nylon	Linen
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
Care and laundering:					
Easily washed or ironed -----	49	49	41	37	27
Can be laundered, needs no dry-cleaning ----------	23	--	--	--	17
Launders well----------	22	11	10	--	22
Wash-and-wear, drip-dry, minimum care ----------	--	54	69	60	--
Dries quickly ----------	--	--	10	18	--
Can be dry-cleaned, dry-cleans well ----------	--	--	--	--	12
Weight and comfort:					
Cool, absorbent ----------	48	24	21	22	24
Appearance and style:					
Wrinkle resistant, fresh-looking ----------	18	39	29	34	39
Nice-looking, pretty --------	--	--	--	11	12
Dressy, feminine ----------	--	--	--	--	17
Durability:					
Durable, stands up well -----	15	11	10	15	20
Colorfast ----------	10	--	--	--	12
Holds shape, doesn't shrink or stretch ----------	--	10	--	--	10
Versatility:					
Suitable for different occasions ----------	--	--	--	--	10
Number of women -----	1,160	316	94	85	59

1/ Percentages add to more than 100 because of multiple answers.

Table 5.--Between-seasons dresses (readymade): Reasons mentioned by 10 percent or more of the women for liking preferred material best 1/

Major reasons	Material preferred for between-seasons dresses					
	Cotton	Wool	Rayon or acetate	Silk	Cotton-Dacron	Linen
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
Care and laundering:						
Can be laundered, needs no dry-cleaning	33	--	13	--	21	13
Easily washed or ironed	31	--	11	--	30	18
Launders well	10	--	--	--	--	13
Can be dry-cleaned, dry-cleans well	--	10	19	14	--	--
Wash-and-wear, drip-dry, minimum care	--	--	--	--	26	--
Weight and comfort:						
Right weight	17	20	16	14	20	21
Cool, absorbent	11	--	--	--	--	--
Warm, heavy	--	38	12	--	--	--
Lightweight	--	16	--	--	--	--
Feels soft, good	--	11	--	20	--	--
Appearance and style:						
Wrinkle resistant, fresh-looking	12	20	17	16	34	23
Dressy, feminine	--	11	18	24	--	11
Nice-looking, pretty	--	--	--	18	--	--
Stylish, expensive-looking	--	--	--	11	--	--
Durability:						
Durable, stands up well	12	13	12	15	18	13
Holds shape	--	15	--	--	--	--
Versatility:						
Transitional; for different seasons	10	--	--	--	--	--
Practical, suitable	--	--	--	--	10	--
Number of women	235	166	128	123	61	56

1/ Percentages add to more than 100 because of multiple answers.

Table 6.--Knit dresses (readymade): Reasons mentioned by 10 percent or more of the women for liking preferred material best 1/

Major reasons	Material preferred for knit dresses	
	Wool	Orlon
	Percent	Percent
Durability:		
Holds shape, doesn't stretch, bag, shrink	43	49
Durable, stands up well	21	--
Weight and comfort:		
Warm, heavy	27	--
Feels soft, doesn't itch, scratch	--	22
Care and laundering:		
Can be dry-cleaned, dry-cleans well	12	--
Can be laundered	--	33
Number of women	213	55

1/ Percentages add to more than 100 because of multiple answers.

Table 7.--Summer blouses (readymade): Reasons mentioned by 10 percent or more of the women for liking preferred material best 1/

Major reasons	Material preferred for summer blouses			
	Cotton	Cotton-Dacron	Nylon	Dacron
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
Care and laundering:				
Easily washed or ironed	49	53	41	44
Launders well	22	--	10	15
Can be starched	13	--	--	--
Can be laundered, needs no dry-cleaning	11	--	--	--
Wash-and-wear, drip-dry, minimum care	--	61	67	63
Needs little or no starch	--	11	--	--
Weight and comfort:				
Cool, absorbent	48	21	17	19
Appearance and style:				
Wrinkle-resistant, fresh-looking	19	26	15	15
Dressy, feminine	--	--	10	--
Durability	16	11	16	--
Number of women	1,051	285	123	116

1/ Percentages add to more than 100 because of multiple answers.

Table 8.--Winter blouses (readymade): Reasons mentioned by 10 percent or more of the women for liking preferred material best 1/

Major reasons	Material preferred for winter blouses						
	Cotton	Wool	Nylon	Cotton-Dacron	Orlon	Silk	Wool-Orlon
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
Care and laundering:							
Easily washed or ironed	40	--	36	39	37	--	13
Can be laundered, needs no dry-cleaning	25	11	13	13	40	--	33
Launders well	12	--	--	--	--	10	--
Can be dry-cleaned, dry-cleans well	--	14	--	--	--	16	15
Wash-and-wear, drip-dry, minimum care	--	--	54	61	24	--	--
Dries quickly	--	--	14	--	11	--	--
Weight and comfort:							
Warm, heavy	12	66	17	--	22	13	46
Feels soft, good	--	--	--	--	25	19	11
Right weight	--	--	--	--	--	--	13
Appearance and style:							
Wrinkle-resistant, fresh-looking	17	14	12	13	16	--	15
Nice-looking, pretty	--	10	--	--	--	14	13
Dressy, feminine	--	--	12	--	--	27	--
Stylish, expensive-looking	--	--	--	--	--	21	--
Versatility:							
Goes well with other clothes	12	--	--	--	--	32	--
Durability:							
Durable, stands up well	--	--	14	--	13	--	--
Holds shape, doesn't shrink or stretch	--	--	--	--	27	--	24
Colorfast, doesn't fade	--	--	--	--	10	--	--
Number of women	252	148	113	64	63	63	54

1/ Percentages add to more than 100 because of multiple answers.

Table 9.--Summer skirts (readymade): Reasons mentioned by 10 percent or more of the women for liking preferred material best 1/

Major reasons	Material preferred for summer skirts			
	Cotton	Cotton-Dacron	Dacron	Linen
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
Care and laundering:				
Easily washed or ironed	56	44	36	22
Can be laundered, needs no dry-cleaning	22	--	--	--
Launders well	18	--	11	--
Can be starched	12	--	--	--
Wash-and-wear, drip-dry, minimum care	--	52	62	--
Weight and comfort:				
Cool, absorbent	37	18	13	22
Appearance and style:				
Wrinkle-resistant, fresh-looking	19	45	26	33
Nice-looking, pretty	--	--	--	19
Dressy, feminine	--	--	--	10
Durability:				
Durable, stands up well	15	--	12	26
Holds shape, doesn't shrink or stretch	--	--	--	17
Number of women	723	141	74	70

1/ Percentages add to more than 100 because of multiple answers.

Table 10.--Summer suits (readymade): Reasons mentioned by 10 percent or more of the women liking preferred material best 1/

Major reasons	Material preferred for summer suits		
	Cotton	Linen	Dacron
	Percent	Percent	Percent
Care and laundering:			
Easily washed or ironed	30	15	35
Can be laundered, needs no dry-cleaning	26	19	24
Launders well	17	--	12
Wash-and-wear, drip-dry, minimum care	--	--	45
Weight and comfort:			
Cool, absorbent	43	30	12
Appearance and style:			
Wrinkle-resistant, fresh-looking	24	40	49
Nice finish, texture	11	--	--
Nice-looking, pretty	10	10	--
Dressy, feminine	--	15	--
Durability:			
Holds shape, doesn't shrink or stretch	--	18	20
Durable, stands up well	--	15	12
Number of women	163	130	51

1/ Percentages add to more than 100 because of multiple answers.

Table 11.--Whole slips (readymade): Reasons mentioned by 10 percent or more of the women for liking preferred material best 1/

Major reasons	Material preferred for whole slips			
	Nylon	Cotton	Rayon or acetate	Cotton-Dacron
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
Care and laundering:				
Wash-and-wear, drip-dry, minimum care	60	10	14	50
Easily washed or ironed	41	32	24	35
Dries quickly	22	--	--	--
Launders well	--	10	--	--
Durability:				
Durable, stands up well	35	24	18	19
Colorfast, stays white	--	--	--	12
Weight and comfort:				
Cool, absorbent	--	40	21	32
Doesn't cling, ride up	--	29	23	24
Hangs well, fits well	--	--	12	--
Feels soft, doesn't itch	--	--	11	11
Appearance and style:				
Shadowproof, not too sheer	--	11	--	11
Number of women	1,217	338	137	118

1/ Percentages add to more than 100 because of multiple answers.

Table 12.--Petticoats or half slips (readymade): Reasons mentioned by 10 percent or more of the women for liking preferred material best 1/

Major reasons	Material preferred for petticoats or half slips			
	Nylon	Cotton	Cotton-Dacron	Rayon or acetate
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
Care and laundering:				
Wash-and-wear, drip-dry, minimum care	63	12	54	21
Easily washed or ironed	40	28	41	27
Dries quickly	23	--	11	--
Launders well	--	--	--	10
Durability:				
Durable, stands up well	33	15	14	17
Weight and comfort:				
Cool, absorbent	--	45	32	28
Doesn't cling, ride up, bunch	--	32	23	22
Feels soft, good	--	--	--	14
Appearance and style:				
Shadowproof, not too sheer	--	14	11	--
Number of women	742	440	117	105

1/ Percentages add to more than 100 because of multiple answers.

Table 13.--Rainwear (readymade): Reasons mentioned by 10 percent or more of the women for liking preferred material best 1/

Major reasons	Material preferred for rainwear			
	Cotton	Plastic	Rayon or acetate	Cotton-Dacron
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
Weight and comfort:				
Cool	13	--	--	--
Lightweight	--	24	10	11
Right weight	--	--	10	--
Appearance and style:				
Nice-looking, pretty	12	--	15	13
Wrinkle-resistant, neat	--	--	15	17
Dressy, feminine	--	--	13	--
Versatility, adaptability:				
Dual purpose	18	--	33	19
Can be folded, carried easily	--	28	--	--
Durability:				
Durable, stands up well	20	12	12	23
Care and laundering:				
Can be dry-cleaned, dry-cleans well	11	--	--	--
Wash-and-wear, drip-dry, minimum care	--	--	--	11
Water repellent	22	51	31	32
Inexpensive	--	25	--	--
Number of women	221	190	61	53

1/ Percentages add to more than 100 because of multiple answers.